

PETITION – TAXI RANK ACCESSIBILITY

Executive Summary

Woking Borough Council has received a petition requesting that the taxi rank be moved closer to the train station in order to improve taxi accessibility.

In accordance with Woking Borough Council's arrangements for petitions, the matter has been referred for consideration by the Executive.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to consider the petition and determine accordingly.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To agree a response to the petition.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	Petition – Received 7 November 2019.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A petition has been received requesting that the taxi rank be moved closer to the train station in order to improve taxi accessibility. The petition has been received through the Council's online e-petition scheme and contains 184 confirmed signatories and 22 unconfirmed signatories.
- 1.2 The number of signatures exceeds the threshold required for a petition to be referred to a meeting of the Executive and accordingly the Petitioner or their nominee has been invited to present the petition at the Executive.
- 1.3 The petition has been submitted in the following terms:

"We the undersigned petition Woking Borough Council to:

'Put in measures to improve taxi accessibility'

The distance from the train station to the taxi rank is an access issue for less-abled people and also inconveniences customers on rainy days. We would like the rank to be moved closer to the station.

The current route taxi drivers have to take does not let them travel straight through the High Street, and instead involves going around Victoria Way to get to places such as Goldsworth Road and Old Woking. This indirect route impacts negatively on fares for customers and makes journeys longer than necessary. We are requesting that taxis be allowed to access bus lanes through the High Street, a practice already in place in several cities and towns across the country.

We request that where WBC can make the change they do so. Where WBC cannot make the change directly then the council strongly recommends to the relevant parties that these amendments are made."

- 1.4 The on-line petition went live on 7 October 2019 and the Petitioner formally asked for it to be closed on 7 November 2019.

2.0 Petitions Scheme

- 2.1 As the number of signatories exceeds 100, the petition falls to be debated at the Executive. In accordance with the Council's scheme for dealing with petitions, the petitioner has been invited to attend the meeting and present the petition. The presentation of a petition is limited to not more than three minutes, and should be confined to reading out, or summarising, the purpose of the petition, indicating the number and description of signatories, and making supporting remarks relevant to the petition.
- 2.2 Following the presentation, Members of the Executive will have the opportunity to ask questions of the petitioner. Thereafter, the Executive will discuss the petition and determine what action, if any, is to be taken. To assist the Executive, Officer comments are set out below.

3.0 Officer Comments

- 3.1 It is important to note that the Taxi Rank located on The Broadway is situated to service the Town Centre and is not the Train Station Taxi Rank. The Train Station Taxi Rank is located the South side of the Train Station and is operated by SW Railway. The Taxi Rank is clearly signposted and located within easy access of Town Centre amenities. As such, the Taxi Rank is located in the optimal position and should not be relocated.

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- 3.2 The Highways Authority modelling shows that the new junction at the High Street and Victoria Way cannot facilitate the increased volume of traffic should Taxi's be allowed to use the Bus Lane. This has been explained to the drivers on numerous occasions including at a lengthy meeting in November 2017 attended by Ray Morgan, Cllr Harlow in her, then, capacity as Chairman of the Licensing Committee and several members of the Woking Taxi Association together with their Solicitor. The position has not changed and the junction currently cannot cope with the increase volume of traffic should Taxi's be allowed to use the Bus Lane.

REPORT ENDS